

Lipson Co-operative Academy

Address: Bernice Terrace, Lipson, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 7PG

Unique reference number (URN): 136668

Inspection report: 28 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff get to know pupils extremely well. Pupils' needs are identified quickly and accurately. They develop strong partnerships with families and external agencies, as appropriate, to put in place the right academic and pastoral support. Leaders ensure that they monitor, review and adapt this support as required. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those known (or previously known) to social care thrive at this school.

Leaders demonstrate a deep understanding of the potential barriers faced by pupils in receipt of the pupil premium. This funding is used to implement well-considered strategies that are regularly reviewed and refined. For example, early in class intervention has resulted in a notable reduction in suspensions and class removals for some pupils.

Leaders make effective use of alternative provision for a small number of pupils. At times, this is on site in 'The Lodge' or 'The Pavilion'. These provisions are proving invaluable in supporting pupils to attend more regularly and be successful in their learning. Leaders ensure that these pupils continue to feel part of the Lipson community.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders demonstrate an unwavering commitment to ensuring that every child is safe, happy and successful. They advocate for every pupil, but particularly those who are disadvantaged, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those known, or previously known, to social care.

Leaders demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the school's areas of strength and priorities. This is informed by detailed and insightful analysis of school performance, both at school and trust level. They adopt a 'whatever it takes' approach, and this can be seen in the rapid improvement in areas that have been prioritised, for example the reduction in suspensions, the successful implementation of the coaching model and increased participation of pupils in the enrichment programme.

There is absolute clarity in the vision and strategic direction provided by those responsible for governance. They ensure that there are multi-layered levels of support and challenge for leaders. They meet all statutory duties.

Staff love working at this school. Many describe Lipson as their 'forever school'. They feel highly valued and know that leaders will always ensure that their workload is protected and manageable. Equally, parents are very positive about the school. They have confidence in the leaders and wider staff to support, challenge and care for their child.

Leaders have created a highly effective culture of professional learning and expertise informed by the most up-to-date research. They ensure that it is precisely matched to priorities for whole-school improvement, but staff also take responsibility for their own learning and are keen to continually improve their expertise.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The programme for personal development is extensive, carefully planned and thoughtfully tailored to the needs and context of pupils. Leaders demonstrate a deep understanding of their pupils and community, and they use this knowledge to design provision that is highly relevant and responsive. For example, adaptations are made in response to events in the city and there is a prevalence of discussions around misogyny in the media.

Pupils have detailed knowledge of key aspects of personal development, including relationships, citizenship and life in modern Britain. They confidently explain how the school supports their wellbeing and prepares them for life beyond school. For example, pupils recall in detail recent lessons in finance that they have received. Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe online as well as in the community.

Pupils receive excellent care and support. Pupils value the role of their tutor and the wider pastoral team. They know they can seek guidance or advice with any worries or concerns they may have.

Leaders have established a coherent and progressive careers programme, which provides a clear structure from Year 7 through to post-16 and beyond. Strong partnerships with key local employers and universities ensure that careers education is relevant to local opportunities, while also raising aspiration beyond the immediate community. A particular strength is the highly personalised and persistent support provided for vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, pupils receive tailored guidance and repeated opportunities to explore different pathways.

Pupils participate readily in the wide range of opportunities available. The breadth of provision, including cultural visits, performances, enrichment week and transition programmes, ensures that pupils develop confidence, resilience and wider cultural awareness. Pupil leadership opportunities are purposeful, with pupils actively influencing decisions within the school community. Extra-curricular clubs such as art, drama, volleyball and musical rehearsals are well attended.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

On the whole, pupils achieve well. This is reflected in their achievement in national tests and examinations, which is broadly in line with national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils. Where any under performance is identified, leaders take swift action to support these curriculum areas and drive up improvements. The impact of this is seen in the high quality of work pupils produce in lessons across the curriculum. Any gaps in knowledge or skills, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are closing quickly. For example, where pupils find reading more difficult, they receive swift and effective support to catch up to their peers.

Typically, pupils are well prepared for their next stage. Most achieve the qualifications they need to go on to further education, employment or training. Pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. Alongside academic qualifications, they successfully develop life skills and leave as more confident and resilient individuals. They are well prepared for adulthood.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise improving pupils' attendance at school. They effectively analyse patterns around absence and work constructively with families to assert the importance of attending regularly. As a result, attendance for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is improving, particularly when compared to that of similar schools. However, for some pupils, it remains too low. There are still too many pupils who have attendance that is lower than 90%.

Leaders and staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. There are clear, embedded routines for the different parts of the school day. For example, the warm welcome at the start of the day and the smooth transitions at the end of social times. Pupils interact with each other and adults with respect, maturity and kindness.

In lessons, pupils listen attentively and are focused on their learning. The school is a tolerant and caring place. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident in the school's firm and consistent response to any concerns they raise around bullying or other forms of discrimination or derogatory language. There is a culture of mutual respect.

Leaders have established a range of effective provision to meet the needs of pupils, especially the most vulnerable. This has contributed to a reduction in suspensions from school and less need to remove pupils from lessons.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching across the school. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. Professional learning, including coaching, is used effectively to strengthen practice in teaching within and across curriculum areas.

Pupils study a broad and ambitious curriculum. A small number of pupils follow a personalised or slightly reduced timetable. This is carefully planned and appropriate to pupils' needs. Pupils who need additional help with reading, handwriting, spelling or numeracy are quickly identified and supported. The curriculum is well sequenced to support pupils in securing essential knowledge and skills over time.

Generally, teachers use assessment well to check pupils' understanding and adapt future teaching. For example, self-assessment is a regular feature, as is live modelling. However, pupils do not always receive enough opportunities to discuss their ideas and deepen their understanding through spoken language.

Teachers know which pupils may need additional support. They adapt their practice so that these pupils can keep up with learning. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged receive more frequent check-ins and

targeted questioning. This ensures that any gaps in knowledge or misconceptions are quickly identified and addressed.

Post 16 provision

Expected standard 

The curriculum meets students' needs and supports them to be successful in their future endeavours. Staff know students well. They provide bespoke support, such as additional one-to-one study lessons, to remove any barriers to learning,

Teachers are experts in their subjects. Lessons demonstrate fidelity to the routines of 'The Lipson Way'. This supports all students, but particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Typically, teachers carefully check students' understanding and adapt their lessons accordingly.

Generally, students achieve well. Published outcomes from 2025 show a reduction in overall attainment, but the progress students make from their starting points is consistently close to the national average. In lessons, students produce work of a high quality. They confidently articulate their learning over time.

Students participate in a suitably wide range of enriching opportunities. For example, all students attend extra-curricular activities on a Wednesday afternoon. Students are involved in the wider life of the school, including reading to younger pupils.

Students learn an appropriate personal, social, health and economic curriculum. Current topics include how to manage distractions such as social media effectively. Students benefit from high-quality, individualised careers advice. The number of students who secure their chosen destinations on leaving school has significantly increased.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are proud to belong to the 'Lipson family'. They develop mutually respectful and trusting relationships with staff. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, feel known as individuals. Happiness, warmth and kindness permeate the corridors and classrooms. Pupils know that adults care about them. This helps them to feel safe in school. Pupils are confident to report any worries and concerns they may have. They know staff will act quickly to support them. This strong sense of belonging is helping to increase pupils' attendance. However, some pupils still miss too many days of school.

Typically, pupils here achieve well, including those who are disadvantaged or have other barriers to their learning or wellbeing. Most achieve the qualifications they need to take their next steps in education, employment or training successfully. Pupils are aspirational for their futures. They are inspired to consider their 'dream job' and work hard to achieve this goal. In the sixth form, more students than ever before are taking up places at university.

Pupils behave well in school. They rise to the high expectations set by leaders. They engage positively with their learning in lessons. Pupils are well mannered and friendly. At social times, the school has a buzz of activity. Pupils enjoy this free time and regulate their

behaviour well. They are proud of their school and respectful of their surroundings. Students in the sixth form show high levels of independence. They are role models for younger pupils.

Pupils benefit from a range of enriching opportunities and experiences. Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils can access these and benefit fully. For example, every child can learn to play a musical instrument. Music is a constant presence in the daily life of the school. Pupils are proud of their participation in groups such as the Navy Cadet Force. Through these experiences, pupils develop their leadership skills, as well as their determination and resilience.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to embed their attendance strategy to further improve the overall attendance of all pupils and reduce the numbers of pupils who are regularly absent from school.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils consistently develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum, and for this to be reflected in all published outcomes at key stage 4 and 5.
 - Leaders should ensure that teaching consistently supports pupils to communicate effectively through spoken language so that they deepen their understanding across the curriculum.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Ted Wragg Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Moira Marder, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Mulcock.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with school and trust leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator (SENDCo). Inspectors also spoke with teaching staff, support staff and representatives of the trust and local governing boards.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The school currently makes use of 2 registered alternative provisions.

A new headteacher has recently started in role.

Lead inspector:

Kelly Olive, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Nic Blunsum, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Forster, Ofsted Inspector

Craig Follett, Ofsted Inspector

Jo Guest, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,096

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,150

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

44.83%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.82%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

16.61%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	41.8%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50.9%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	39.9%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	43.5	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	47.5	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	45.4	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	0.40	-0.03	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.24	-0.03	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	34.7%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	35.6%	25.8%	Above
2022/23 (final)	26.2%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	39.6	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	40.3	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	40.4	35.0	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.01	-0.57	Above
2022/23 (final)	0.08	-0.57	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	34.7%	53.1%	-18.5 pp
2023/24 (final)	35.6%	53.1%	-17.6 pp
2022/23 (final)	26.2%	52.4%	-26.3 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	39.6	50.4	-10.8
2023/24 (final)	40.3	50.0	-9.7
2022/23 (final)	40.4	50.3	-9.9

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.01	0.16	-0.18
2022/23 (final)	0.08	0.17	-0.09

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	89%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	89%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	95%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	31.24	35.00	Below
2023/24 (final)	34.42	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	29.49	34.16	Below

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	-0.1	0.0	Close to average
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	9.9%	8.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	10.3%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	9.7%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	29.4%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	31.9%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	31.3%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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